THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (e) The Government had decided in November, 1997 that subsidy on LPG will be reduced in phases to reach the level of 15% of the import parity price by 2000-01. The subsidy will be transferred to the fiscal budget from the year 2002 onwards. Ac-cordingly, Government decided to reduce the subsidy by Rs. 24/cylinder. However, to reduce the burden on customers, the Government reviewed the cylinder compensation scheme for the oil companies and Rs. 10/-cylinder was adjusted towards price increase. The ex-storage point price of LPG packed (Domestic) was increased by Rs. 14/cylinder (Rs. 985.92 per MT) only exclusive of duty, sales tax and other local levies effective midnight of 31st January/lst February, 1999.

Cost of Piped Gas

392. SHRI YERRA NARAYANAS-WAMY: Will the Minister of. PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the cost of supplying piped gas for domestic use;

(b) whether GAIL has made any con-clusive studies in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that the cost of piped gas should work out cheaper from the existing system of cylinders; and

(d) the details of comparative costs of both the systems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) The cost for the supply of piped gas varies from region to region depending on availability of natural gas, geographical structures and feasibility of the area.

(b) Yes, Sir. Studies have been con-ducted only in the National Capital Region of Delhi and Mumbai.

(c) This depends upon the geographical features and feasibility report on laying of pipeline network in the town concerned.

(d) No comparative study of the two systems, which are totally different, has been carried out. However, a rebate @ 10% 'has been granted on the price of natural gas supplied under the Delhi city gas distribution pilot project vis-a-vis equivalent quantity of LPG for domestic use.

Filling up ot vacancies in various PSUs

393. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of top vacancies of Chairman / Managing Directors / Director that are still lying vacant in various PSUs/Boards/Committees functioning under the control of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the last two years, till date;

(b) the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons for not filling up the posts and by when these are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The details of various vacancies as on date are as under:—

(i) C&MD, Madras Refineries Limited w.e.f. 25.11.98.

(ii) Director (Projects), Gas Authority of India Limited w.e.f. 1.4.96.

(iii) Director (Finance) Bongaigaon Refinery & Petrochemicals Limited w.e.f. 10.7.98.

(iv) Director (Finance), Oil India Li-mited w.e.f. 1.2.98.

(v) Director (E&D), OIL w.e.f. 25.1.99.

(c) The Public Enterprises Selectior Board (PESB) has been requested for making selection in respect of posts at SI. No. (i) to (iii) above. As regards SI. No. (iv) above, ACC has advised to get the panel revalidated in consultation with PESB. As regards SI. No. (v) above nominations have been called far from PSUs.

पेट्रोलियम क्षेत्र में उदारीकरण

394. **श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन** : क्या पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार यह अनुभव करती हैं कि पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों के संबंध में भारत को अधिक उदार नीति अपनानी पड़ेगी;

(ख) क्या पेट्रोलियम क्षेत्र में और उदारीकरण करने के संबंध में सरकार का ध्यान दिनांक 13 जनवरी, 1999 के "द हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स" में प्राकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया हैं; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो इस पर सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया हैं?

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री संतोष कुमार गंगवार) : (क) से (ग) जी, हां। सरकार ने प्रगामी रूप से एक उचित नीति अपनाई हैं। सितम्बर, 1997 में घोषित सरकार के निर्णय के अनुसरण में प्रशासित मूल्य व्यवस्था को समाप्त करने की प्रक्रिया 1 अप्रैल, 1998 को आरम्भ हुई थी। यह सुधार चरणबद्व रूप से क्रियान्वित किए जा रहे हैं और यह प्रक्रिया 2002 तक पूरी होनी हैं। तेल एवं गैस अन्वेषण को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए नई अन्वेषण लाईसेंस नीति घोषित की गई हैं। सरकार ने तेल कंपनियों को डाउनस्ट्रीम क्षेत्र के अंतर्गत अन्वेषण एवं उत्पादन क्षेत्र में प्रवेश करने के लिए भी अनुमति दे दी हैं। शोधन, लाइसेंस मुक्त हैं। सरकार ने भट्टी तेल, नाफ्था (प्रतिबंधित) एवं पेट्रो रसायन फीड स्टाक्स (अर्थात् बेंजीन, टाउलीन, जाइलीन), पेट कोक इत्यादि जैसे कुछ एक उत्पादों के सीधे आयातों के लिए अनुमति देने के अलावा एल पी जी, एस के ओ तथा एल एस एच एस के समानान्तर विपणन के लिए भी अनुमति दे दी हैं। प्राकृतिक गैस भी मुक्त सामान्य लाइसेंस पर हैं और इसके आयात के लिए किसी लाइसेंस की जरूरत नहीं हैं। सरकार इस क्षेत्र में सीधे विदेशी निवेश को प्रोत्साहित करती रही हैं।

Production of Natural Gas

395.SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken up for more produc tion of natural gas to meet the country's requirement; and

(b) how far the production of natural gas in this country can meet the country's need?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH] KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Steps taken no increase the natural gas production are:—

(i) Better reservoir management.

(ii) Implementation of specialised technologies such as extended reach drilling, horizontal and drain hole drilling, redistribution of water injection etc.

(iii) 3-D seismic surveys for better understanding of the fields/reservoir.

(iv) Intensification of exploration efforts in the existing basins and its expansion to deep water and frontier areas.

(v) Encouragement to participation of pvt. /joint venture companies in exploration activities.

(vi) Operationalisation of New. Exploration Licensing Policy to encourage exploration activities.

(vii) Implementation of new projects schemes for additional development of existing fields / development of new fields.

(b) At the current levels of production, the gap between demand and supply is estimated to be 120 million standard cubic meters per day (MMSCMD) in

2004-05 and increase to 215 MMSCMD . by 2009-10.